

**Address of  
Major General Edward Martin  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
at the Dinner of the  
State Veterans' Commission**



**PENN - HARRIS HOTEL  
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Address of Major General Edward Martin, Governor of Pennsylvania, at the Dinner of the State Veterans' Commission, in the Penn-Harris Hotel, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Saturday Evening, March 9, 1946, at 6:30 o'clock

**Mr. Toastmaster, Comrades and Fellow-Americans:**

Upon the proper readjustment of the United States, and particularly our 12,000,000 veterans of World War II, depends the future of our country, and even of the world, for generations to come.

Britain had 5,000,000; Canada, Australia and South Africa had a total of 3,000,000; and New Zealand 200,000—a total of 8,200,000 from the British Commonwealth. About 10 per cent of the total population of these countries was mobilized.

Our mobilization did not reach that percentage in armed forces. Our contribution to the war, however, was unequalled. The production of munitions, the growing of food and the fighting record of our troops have never been approached in the history of nations. The proof of this statement rests on the production of 3,400,000 motor vehicles, 72,000 ships, 250,000 planes, 100,000 tanks, 600,000 cannons and 17,000,000 rifles; on the growing and processing of millions of tons of food; the transportation of materials and troops to every corner

of the globe; and upon the skillful, brave and powerful maneuvering of our fleets, air forces and armies all over the world.

The work saved civilization and gave us the right to be heard in this chaotic postwar world. The results of the war demonstrated the greatness of our form of government and the American way of life.

We started the war under a great handicap. Our Army was small. We lacked equipment. We did not have such vital materials as raw tin, rubber, wool and sugar. Our enemies were well prepared. They had been preparing for years.

Under similar conditions any other nation would have been defeated. Our supply bases were thousands of miles from the front line and they were thousands of miles apart. Our people dreaded and hated war.

Pearl Harbor roused our people to the stark danger of crushing defeat. After Pearl Harbor we showed our stern unity and real strength. In four years we did what it took Germany nine years, Russia twenty years and Japan twenty-five years to do. One skilled American worker could do as much as three in the slave-worker countries. An American in uniform could and did out-march, out-fly, out-maneuver, out-smart and out-fight any man in the world and also give the enemy the choice of position.

Why? The answer is plain. Our way of life made it possible. The Constitution guarantees every American certain inalienable rights, including the pursuit of happiness. We had always developed the individual. He had worked where, when and how at the job of his choice. No government told him where to work.

Our job now is to retain these great privileges; to keep the doors of opportunity open; and to help the veteran to be ready to accept these opportunities. He must be prepared to do a useful job and to find his way to happiness and contentment.

When we make possible a job for the veteran, we give him earning power, dignity and self-respect. We want to help but in helping it is well to recall the philosophy of George Westinghouse, who said:

"A dollar given to a man does him ten dollars worth of harm but a dollar honestly earned by his own effort does him ten dollars worth of good."

We want to put our veterans in a position where they can take advantage of their opportunities. They do not want hand-outs. They do not want something for nothing.

Our veterans of World War II are entitled to many benefits. These benefits include Discharge Payments, Loans and Grants, Unemployment Benefits, Employment Preference and Reinstatement, Education, Vocational Training and Medical Benefits. All these they have earned. All these are to give them the opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution.

The United States leads other nations in Unemployment Compensation payments; Civil Service Preference credits; educational and vocational training; in the most liberal program of hospitalization; and has the highest pension rate.

Great Britain and the British Dominions pay larger lump sums at discharge. Their loans and credits vary in accordance with circumstances and the length of service.

The United States has always done more for its veterans than any other nation of the world. It has been said that "republics are ungrateful." The American Republic has always been both generous and grateful to its veterans.

At your plates tonight is a copy of an address made by me to the Governors' Conference July 3, 1945. It stresses the importance of community effort.

If the returning veteran is to be readjusted—if he is to receive the privileges which his grateful country wants him to

have—this will be done by the help and counsel of local communities. This is as it should be. It follows out our plan of local government—which is really self-government. It brings the responsibility to our own doors. Local government, veterans' organizations, churches, schools, chambers of commerce, service clubs, unions, granges and other groups are responsible for this job. There is no bigger job facing this country today.

We must bear in mind that with the exception of our War of the Revolution, this was the longest war in which Americans have fought. Our soldiers were, as they always have been, the "cream of the crop." They were selected because they were the best physically and the most alert mentally. The future greatness of our country depends upon their readjustment.

When we talk with them we should not forget to express our great appreciation for what they have done. These veterans are creators and doers of tomorrow. They fought the war and now they must bear more than three-fourths of the future tax burden.

The State of Pennsylvania will use all its facilities to help in the readjustment program. This Commonwealth will be forever indebted to her 1,250,000 veterans who fought so gallantly by land and sea and in the air so that we at home might live in peace, security and comfort. We never can pay the debt we owe to the families of the 25,000 who made the final sacrifice. We will not forget that all possible help must be given to the sick and disabled and the dependents of the sick and disabled and of those who died in the service of their country.

Pennsylvania is proud of the part her sons and daughters played in the final victory. This Commonwealth is determined to do all it can to return them from military to civilian life. This State realizes that the returning service men and women are the greatest asset of the Nation. Our veterans were our last best hope in war and they are our first best hope in peace.

They are coming back to civilian life with the same spirit of unselfishness and teamwork that they showed so often

while freeing the world from the horrors of dictatorship and aggression. They are the American voters, the American taxpayers, the American law-makers and the American workers of tomorrow.

They want a world of peace and harmony, a land of industry, plenty, culture, goodwill and of deep religious conviction. We must see that they have it.

To do this and to reestablish them in civilian life every Federal, State and local agency should be at their service.

We are honored by having with us tonight Major General Graves B. Erskine, of the United States Marine Corps, who has been selected by the President to take charge of the general supervision, direction, rehabilitation and employment of veterans. He is a great combat officer of the magnificent Marine forces. We appreciate his presence here in Pennsylvania and we welcome the work he and his staff are undertaking.

And now, while the smoke of World War II is beginning to clear over the world, we believe the time has come for the United States to announce in clear and forceful words its position on both foreign and domestic problems.

We want to aid the needy, but we cannot feed the world. We want permanent peace, but we alone cannot police the world without maintaining many costly strategical bases; without having the necessary raw war material, and unless we support a powerful Navy, Air Force and Army.

Our foreign policy should be known to our people. It should be announced immediately. New boundary lines should be drawn. The occupation plans for conquered countries and the details of proposed foreign loans should be made known.

At home, a strong fiscal policy is the bedrock of a Republic. The Budget must be balanced and the debt reduced. To avoid further and dangerous inflation, greater production must be

encouraged. Inflation will destroy the generous grants and wreck the readjustment programs of our buddies and their dependents.

The right of the individual must be preserved. He and his rights must be protected against Statism, for it was Statism that we fought the war to destroy.

All of these issues, both foreign and domestic, can be cleared up by plain talk. Plain talk does not create differences but pussyfooting does.

Finally, I would remind you again that while certain State and Federal agencies are responsible under the law for assisting veterans to obtain the rights and privileges guaranteed them by State and National legislation, yet the real task must be done by committees in their home towns and communities.

It is these committees who can and should make the veteran their living and active responsibility. It is they who must and can see to it that he is given an American opportunity.

